

The 30 Cent Nesbitt Envelopes of 1865

The United States first issued high denomination stamped envelopes in 1861, in 12¢, 20¢, 24¢, & 40¢ values. In 1865, 9¢, 18¢, & 30¢ values were added. All were Official size envelopes. The apparent purpose was for multiple use. It is generally accepted that these envelopes were used at the request of the express companies who were required to use stamped envelopes, and often carried large items. Indeed, an estimated 80% of surviving used examples are express uses.

The 1861 high denomination, Bi-Color envelopes were the first US multicolor postal issue, and the only US stamped envelopes (along with the 1861 30¢ of the same design) to use colored lettering on a colorless field.

The redesigned envelopes issued in December of 1865, commonly referred to as the "Pumpkin Heads", were made by the George F. Nesbitt Co of New York, who had held the contract since 1853. The new series reverted to single color printing with conventional lettering, but retained the same basic design of the Bi-Colors. The concessioners were most likely cost saving measures as a result of the Civil War economy. This series remained in production until late 1869 when the contract was canceled, ending the Nesbitt era.

This exhibit will examine all aspects of the 1865, 30¢ denomination.

Left Column: Part 1: The Envelopes

The Exhibit: A Traditional Treatment was chosen to illustrate a wide variety of postal stationery topics, and associated postal history.

Legend: Important: This frame is divided into two columns.

Right Column: Rates and Use Notes

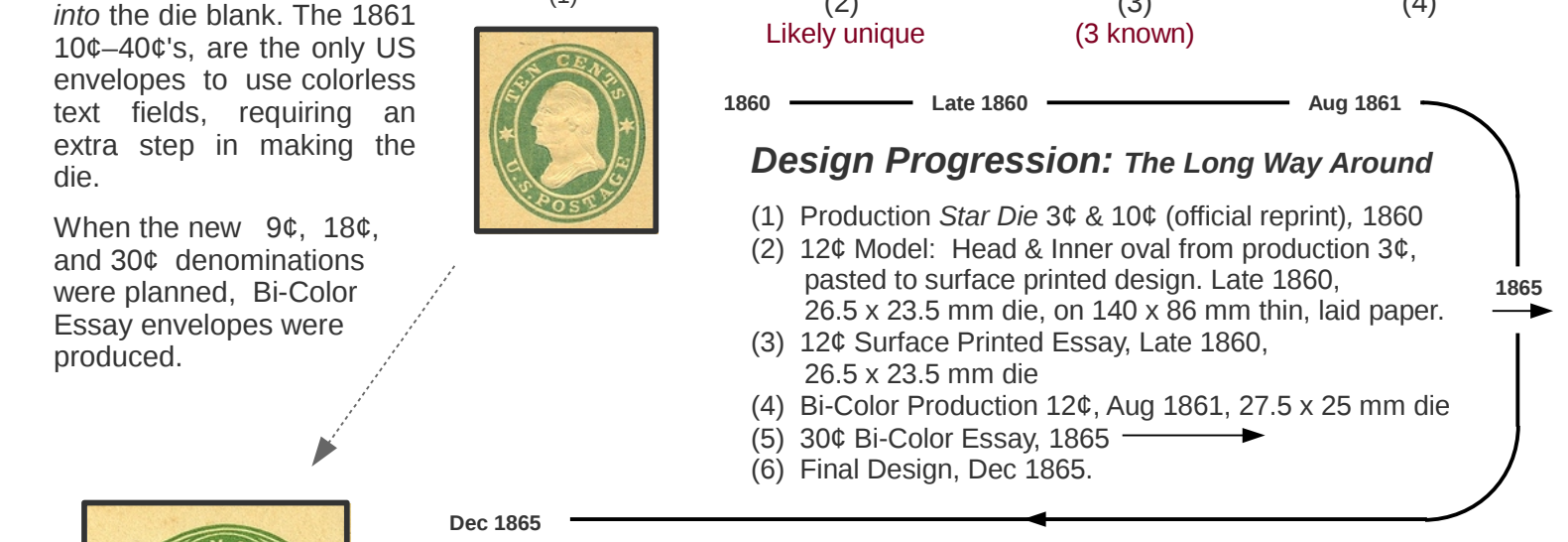
Of the Exhibit Construction: Large format pages are used to allow greater flexibility of arrangement.

A Tag may be included in the frame line with additional information.

Part 1: The Envelopes:

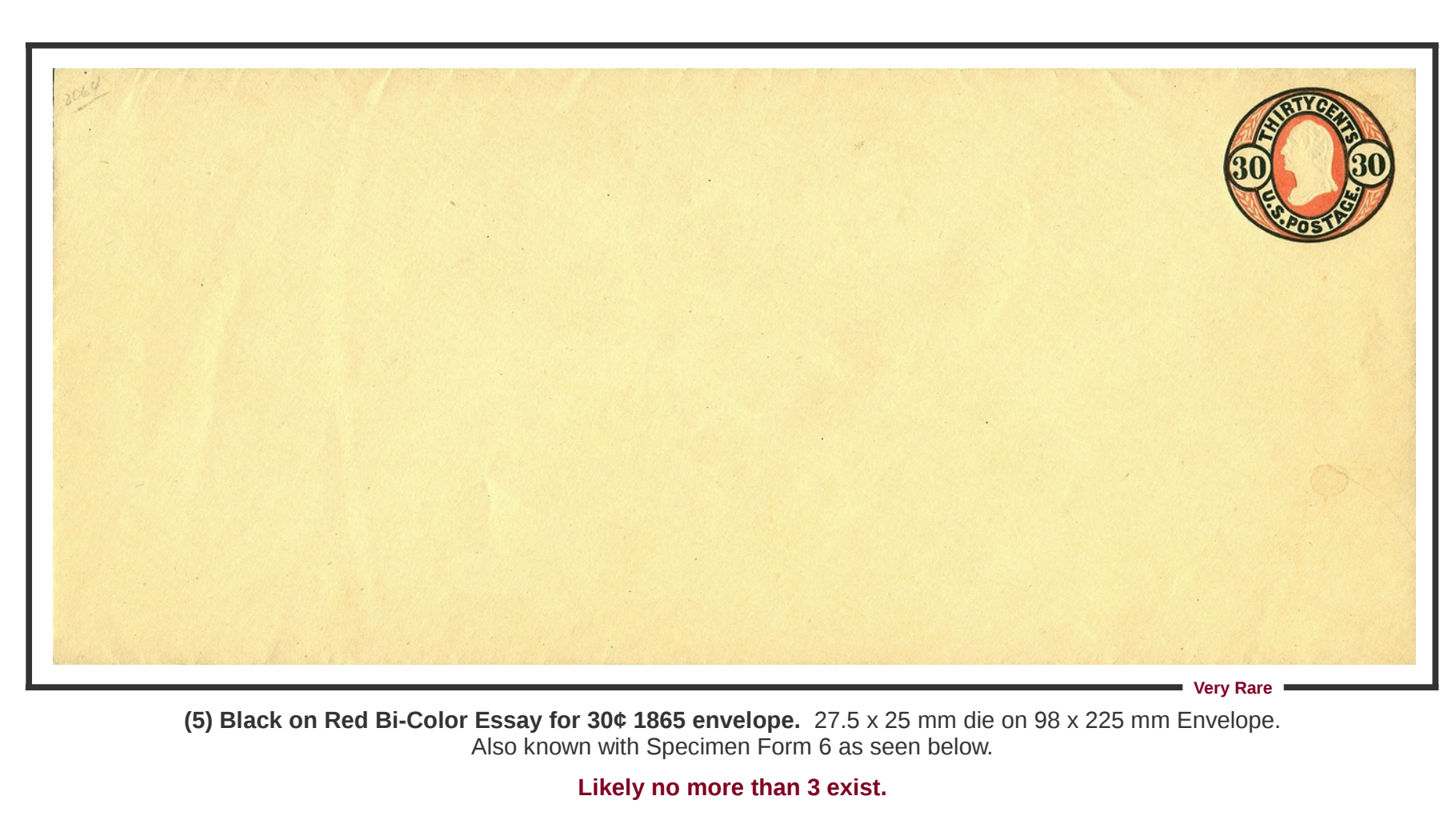
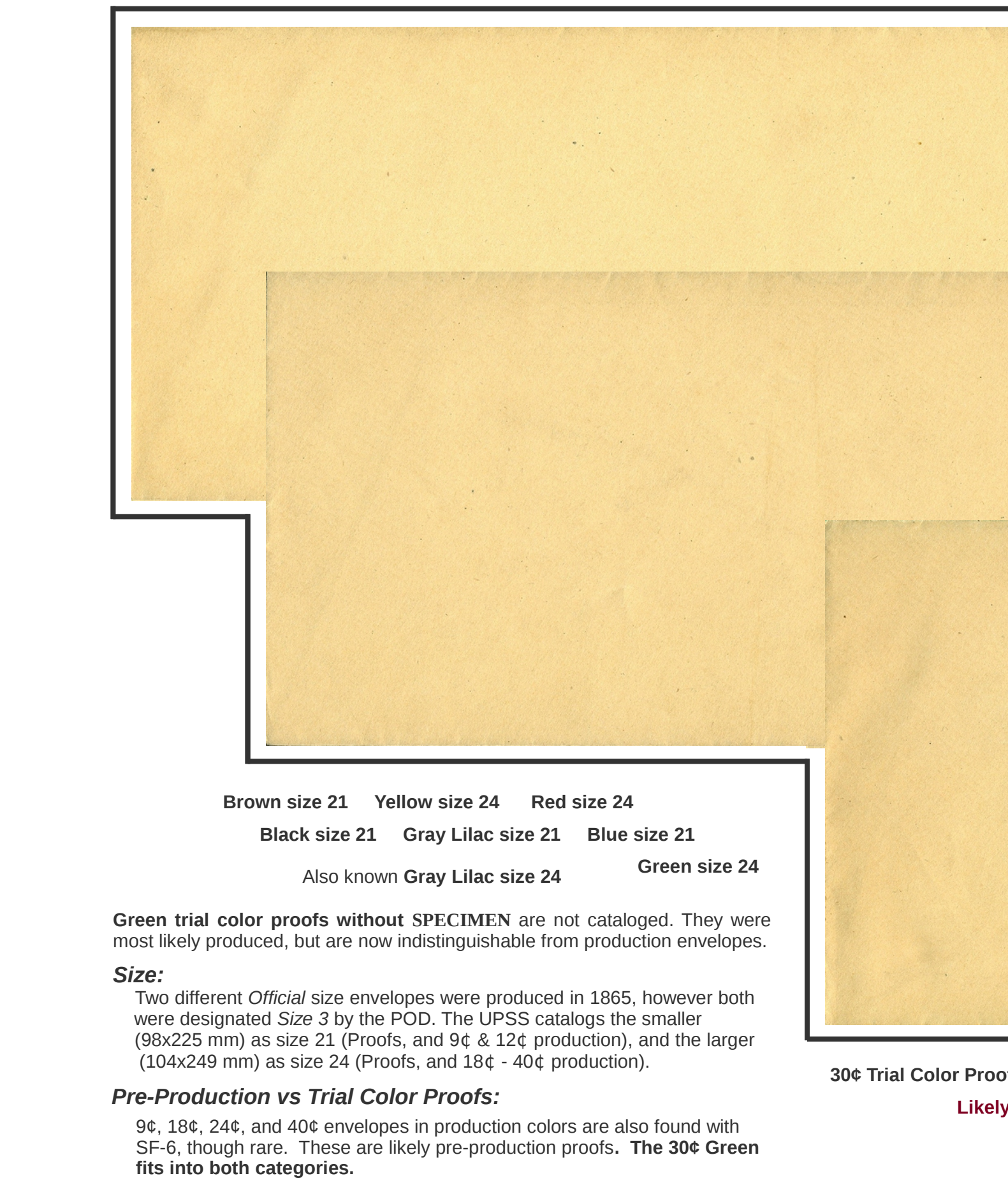
Design:

The design of the new 30¢ envelopes derives from the 1860 Star Dies, the basis for the 1861 12¢ - 40¢ Bi-Color envelopes.

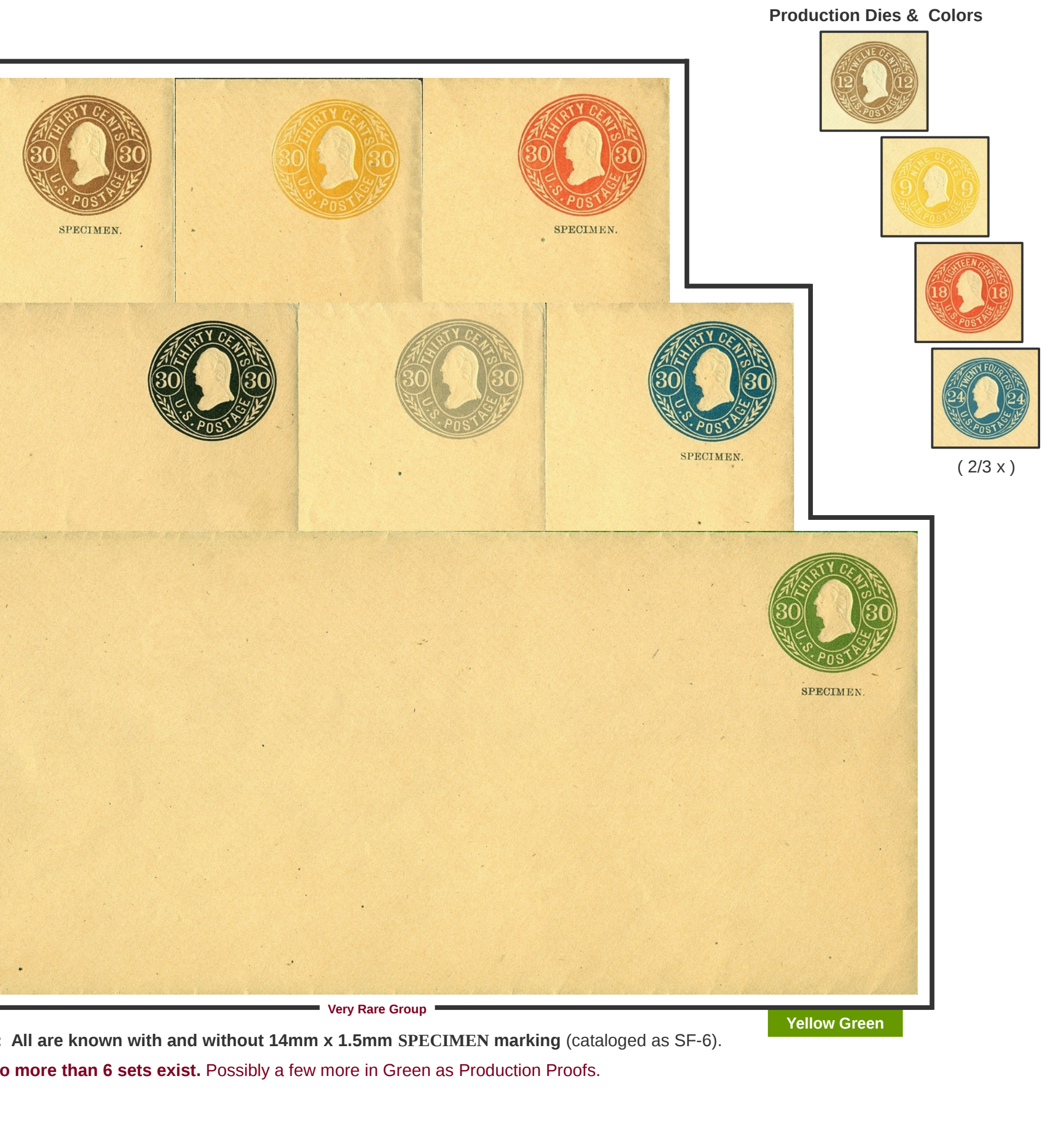


Final Design: The final die retained the same geometric design as the 1861 Bi-Color series, but reverted to the conventional text fields and single color printing of the Star Dies. Both were likely cost saving measures. The size of the die increased to 29 x 27 mm. Cut square shown.

Trial Color Proofs: The production colors for the new 9¢, 12¢, 18¢, 24¢, and 30¢ envelopes were selected from the 30¢ trial color proofs.



(5) Black on Red Bi-Color Essay for 30¢ 1865 envelope. 27.5 x 25 mm die on 98 x 225 mm Envelope. Also known with Specimen Form 6 as seen below. Likely no more than 3 exist.

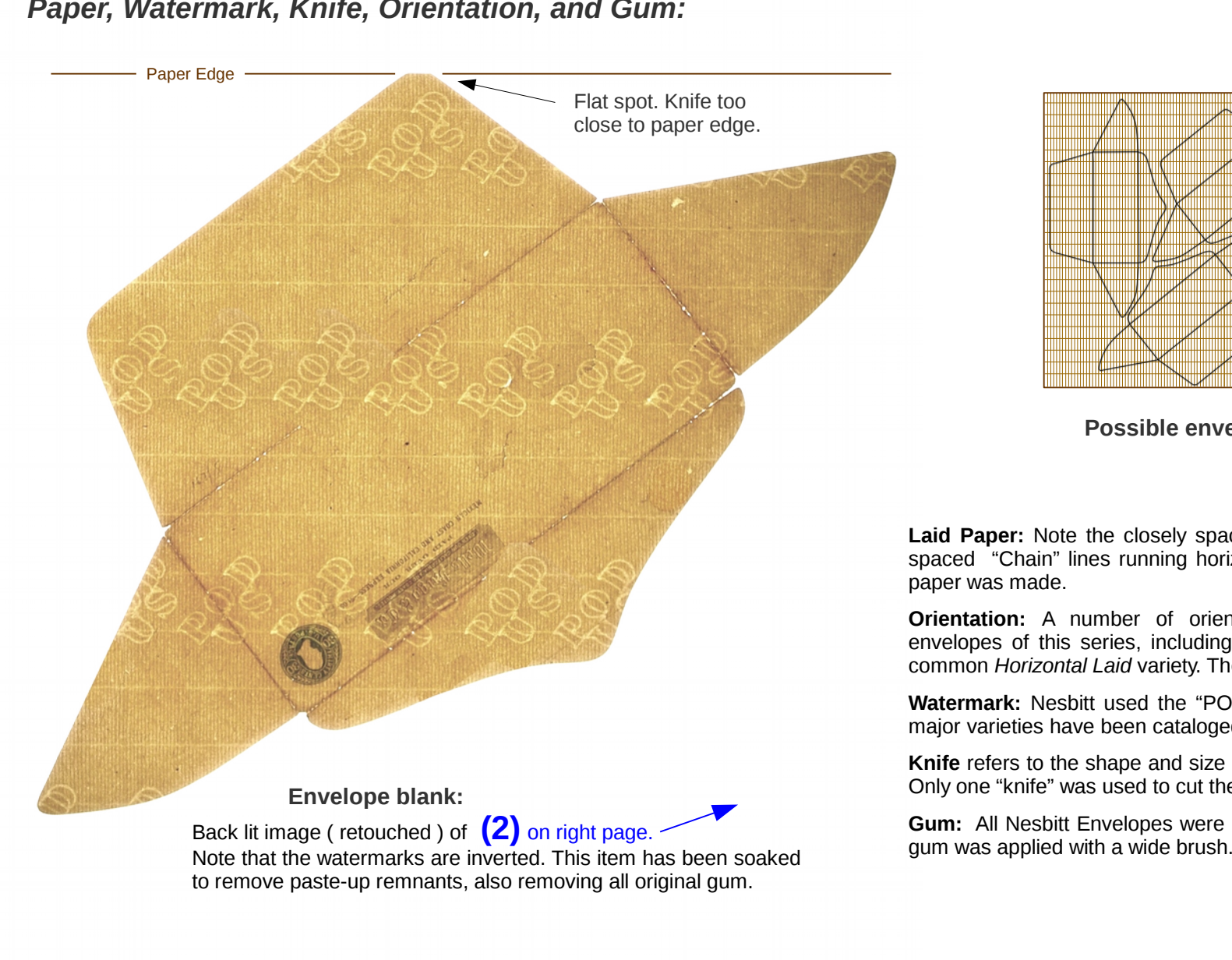


30¢ Trial Color Proofs: All are known with and without 14mm x 1.5mm SPECIMEN marking (cataloged as SF-6). Likely no more than 6 sets exist. Possibly a few more in Green as Production Proofs.

Production: First issued in December 1865. All are size 24 (104x249 mm) on buff laid paper, typically .0245 thick. Most are diagonally laid, but approximately 25% of the size 24 1865 envelopes are horizontally laid.



(1) Green Production Envelope. (Size 24 only)



Laid Paper: Note the closely spaced "Laid" lines running vertically, and the widely spaced "Chain" lines running horizontally, both formed by the screen on which the paper was made.

Watermark: Nesbitt used the "POD US" watermark of the form seen here. Seven major varieties have been cataloged, differing in spacing and angle to the chain lines.

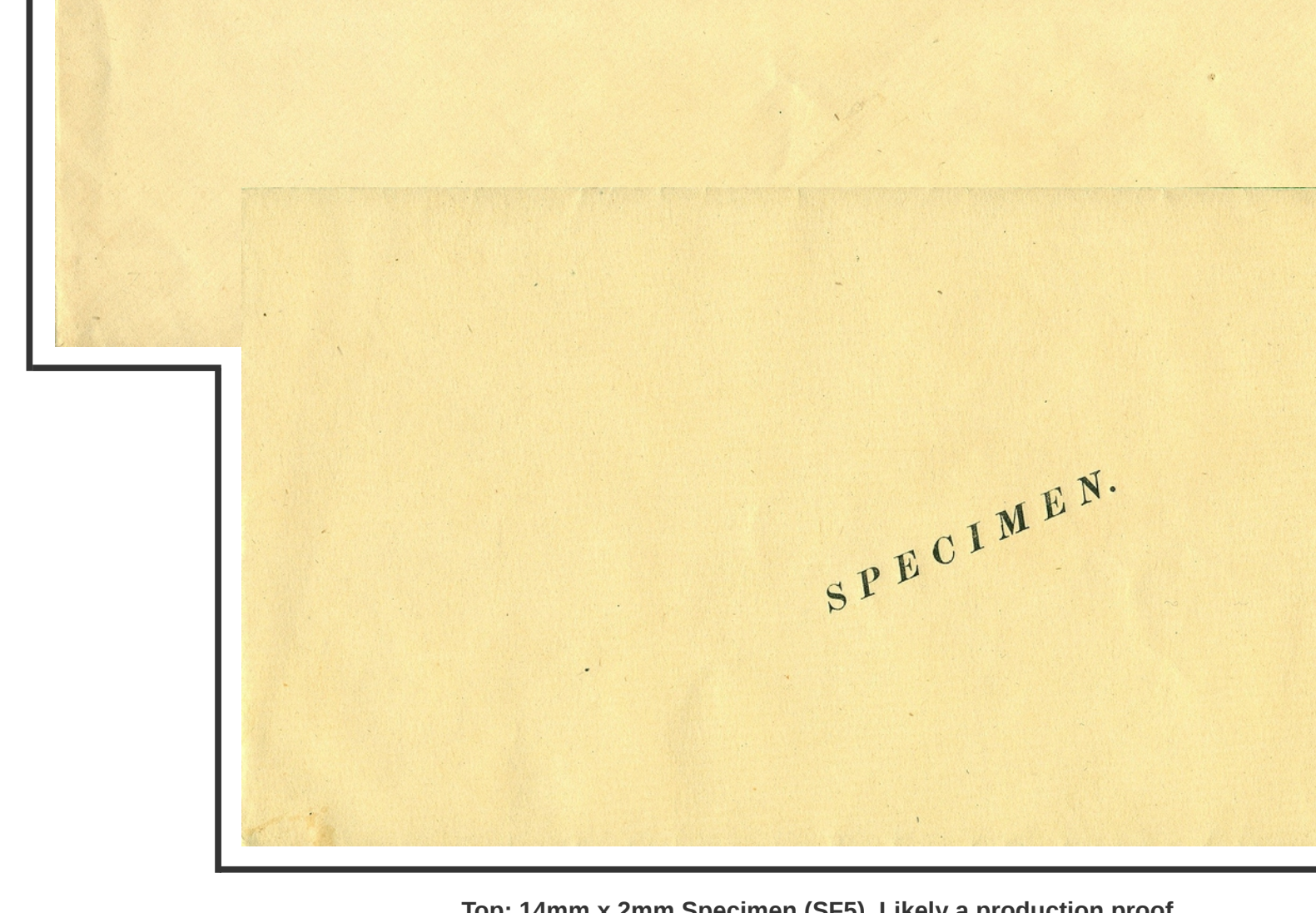
Knife refers to the shape and size of the steel knife used to cut the envelope blanks. Only one "knife" was used to cut the size 24 envelopes from this series.

Gum: All Nesbitt Envelopes were Hand Gummed. Blanks were overlapped, and the gum was applied with a wide brush. Note the Square ends (image to right).

Specimens: Specimen markings were applied to demonetize envelopes for use as: Samples, Advertising, Size, Paper, and Pricing (A19) right, vertical. Similar markings are found on 2¢ - 40¢ envelopes from 1864 - 1870 with adjustments to prices.

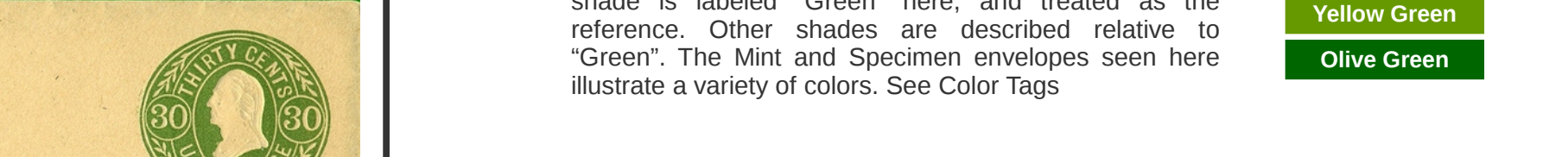
Special Request Advertisement (A4) far right, vertical. Starting in 1865, free printing of return addresses was offered if 500 envelopes were ordered. None were ever ordered on 1865 30¢ envelopes.

No. 3 Official size, Buff: \$308 60 per 1,000, 30 66 per 100, 7 72 per 25.



Top: 14mm x 2mm Specimen (SF5). Likely a production proof. Bottom: 48.5mm x 4mm Specimen (SF3). Promotional Sample.

Color Varieties: Green and Yellow Green are cataloged, however all examples studied are to the yellow side of green in varying degrees.

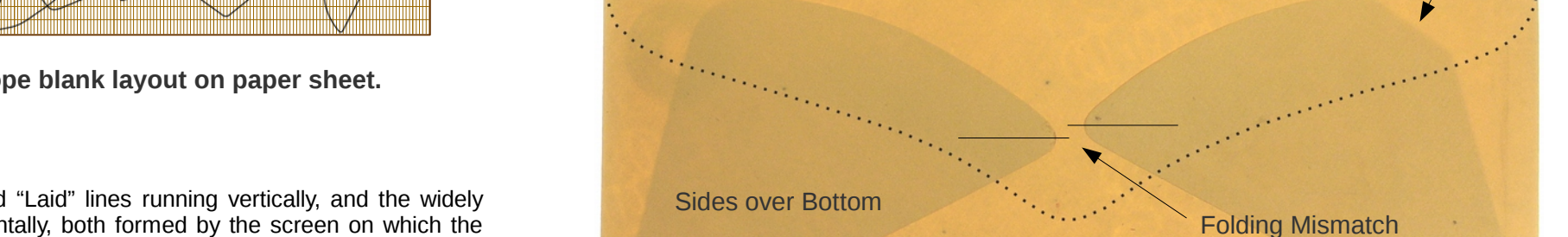


Offsets: If the embossing press is cycled without paper, ink is printed onto the backing plate. Subsequent envelope blanks are thus printed on both sides until the ink on the backing plate is depleted.

Forgeries: Forgeries are found from several sources. All are of poor quality and easily recognized. All exist only as cut squares.



Hybrid front / back kit image of mint envelope (1) above left showing folded shape. Square Gum, Folded Sides over Bottom, Top flap seals to side and bottom flaps, Mismatch of side flap ends (hand folding irregularity), Paper edge flat on bottom flap (knife placement error).



Printing in the form shown above, to the limit of FOUR LINES, will be supplied FREE OF CHARGE upon all Letter, Extra Letter and Official sizes, when ordered in quantities of 500 and upward of any specific denomination.

Return to JOHN DEE & RICHARD ROE, Wholesale and Retail Dealers in Envelope Goods, Corner of Third & B Sts., WASHINGTON, D. C., if not delivered within 10 days.

China and Japan Express: The Pacific Mail Steamship Co began contract mail service to China and Japan on Jan 1, 1867 at the 10¢ Steamship rate.

Wells Fargo & Co's EXPRESS NOTICE. OUR PIONEER EXPRESS... YOKOHAMA AND HONKONA... COLORADO... JAN 1, 1867...

Lower: Wells Fargo "CHINA AND JAPAN" Frank. 4 Recorded on 30¢. Unknown used.



Printed Address Commercial Envelope. Unknown Used.

Rates: Domestic Rate: The US "California" Rate ended July 1, 1863. The Domestic 1st Class Rate, from then until 1883, was 3¢ per 1/2 oz, regardless of distance.

Steamship Rate: The 10¢ Steamship Rate applied to mail carried to or from foreign ports over established postal routes on contract mail steamers, but only in cases where no postal treaty or convention existed.

Express Company Mail: Prior to 1895, private companies could legally carry mail. During the westward expansion, a host of express companies carried mail and freight to and from remote areas.

10x 3¢ Domestic Rate: Wells Fargo California and Atlantic domestic frank. Wells Fargo New York hand stamp.

San Francisco to New Orleans: Used as part of a paste-up (see Paste-up's below), likely carrying legal papers.

3x 10¢ Steamship Rate: Postal: Steam Panama Marking: Like most inbound steamship markings, the Steam Panama marking was applied upon arrival.

Wells Fargo Express: Incoming Wells Fargo Paste-ups from Mexico: Mexican Coast And California Surcharges: Upper: Missing decimal point surcharge variety (\$1.05) below California and Atlantic frank from La Paz.

Printed but Unused: Commercial Uses: Shown is what may have been a moderate volume postal correspondence.

The 1870 Contract: Beginning as a result of Civil War economic conditions, PMG Blair and PMG Randall negotiated a series of contract extensions with George Nesbitt.

Use Notes: Census & Rarity: The author has recorded (14) verifiable, used 30¢ entires, which can be summarized as follows: (14) Postal uses, (10) Wells Fargo uses, including (7) franked & (3) unfranked.

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Part 2: Usages: From New York: Wells Fargo & Co. MAR 1 NEW YORK. Wells Fargo & Co. JUN 9 SAN FRANCISCO.

San Francisco to New Orleans: Wells Fargo & Co. JUN 9 SAN FRANCISCO. Henry J. Leovy Esq. New Orleans La.

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